

Little Caesar on TV

Mother of mercy
 is this the end of Rico?
 or does the pulse of desire
 which lifted him up keep racing
 through rain-slick streets
 like a speeding roadster,
 the fates on its tail in hot pursuit.
 Flaherty, you bastard,
 how easy it is for you to sneer
 at ambition extinguished,
 you whose only hopes revolve
 around slipping the cuffs
 on wrists of men with clearer sight,
 squeezing the juice from fingers
 that have molded life in all
 its uncertainty and rigor,
 that have taken chances.

He wound up in the gutter
that he came from, just as you told
the scribblers he would, just
the way your divine plan dictated
he should, but not because
of any blur in his vision,
any failing of his stout heart—
the way you would have had it—
but because of the fundamental
flaw in his logic: sure, be big,
the heavens are vast, stars beyond
counting and man is puny unless
he dares to stand on tiptoe
and push his hand beyond his reach.
Sure, Rico, be a big shot,
the way the egg stains on your plate
predict, but don't you dare
to spit on the dance,
to step on the toes of the dancer.

DAVE MARGOSHES